DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 075 728 CG 007 865

AUTHOR	Anderson, Herbert
TITLE	Learning and Teaching About Death and Dying.
INSTITUTION	Princeton Theological Seminary, N.J.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	18p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Church Related Colleges; Course Content; *Course Descriptions; Course Evaluation; Course Objectives; *Curriculum Guides; *Death; Student Evaluation; Teaching Methods; Teaching Procedures; *Theological Education

ABSTRACT

This paper is divided into two parts; the first is an attempt to organize the various dimensions of death education in order to clarify educational foci appropriate to different needs for learning about death and dying. These dimensions of death education include: (1) the acceptance of living and dying as concommitant aspects of human enfolding; (2) the use of death to learn how to value life; (3) the specific needs of those who are dying; and (4) the understanding required by professional caretakers of the dying and grieving. The second part of the paper includes an outline of a course on death for prospective pastoral caretakers and some reflections on that process. Detailed references and a course outline form the Princeton Theological Seminary are included. (Author/SES)

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

LEARNING AND TEACHING ABOUT DEATH AND DYING

By Herbert Anderson
Princeton Theological Seminary
Fall, 1972

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
DR. HERBERT ANDERSON
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER

ED 075728

This paper is in two parts. The first part is an attempt to organize the various dimensions of death education in order to clarify different educational foci appropriate to different needs for learning about dying and death. This is particularly important for those engaged in educating professional caretakers because that process is likely to function at more than one level. Since death has been until recently a taboo subject in the family, the church, and the larger society, one cannot assume any appreciation of the reality of death in life. The second half of this paper includes an outline of a course on death for prospective pastoral caretakers and some reflections on that process.

I

1) If one assumes (as I do) that living and dying are concomitant aspects of the same human enfolding, then learning that death is a part of life begins with the physical separation of birth and the subsequent separation of the infant from its socially symbiotic relationship with the mothering one. Although this is an unconscious educational experience for the infant, parents can be consciously attentive to the anxiety of separation and loss in ways that will enable that person to face death as the ultimate experience of loss in life. How one approaches death, therefore, will be determined in part by the way a person learns to handle loss or the prospect of loss from the beginning.

ED 007 865

Although it is certain that there is a wide range of opinion regarding the ability or inability of children to assimilate meanings of death, children do form

attitudes toward death through a variety of influences. Some are good, some are not. Therefore, the question is not whether or not children should receive death education, but whether or not the education they are receiving is reliable and valid. Take for example this simple nursery rhyme that my children have heard innumerable times.

Solomon Grundy,
Born on a Monday,
Christened on Tuesday,
Married on Wednesday,
Took ill on Thursday,
Worse on Friday,
Died on Saturday,
Buried on Sunday,
And this is the end
of Solomon Grundy.

There is a matter-of-factness about death in life from this rhyme that is constructive for the child who is not old enough to conceptualize his own dying but needs to appropriate a general understanding of death in life. Other nursery rhymes of equal innocence are less helpful. I would argue that death education in this sense is as important as sex education and should therefore begin at an early age in order to alleviate unnecessary fears related to death. Death education is a lifelong process by which each person is helped to develop an acceptance of death as a fact of life from childhood through maturity and old age. With the goal in mind of learning that death is a part of life and not an enemy of or an addendum to life, death education begins when life begins.

2) The second focus in death education is on using death to learn how to value life. The realization that I personally will die adds a new seriousness to my living. Despite the fact that most of us are desirous of putting death off, very likely none of us would give up death if we had the choice. Death is a human necessity because life without end would be unbearable. The inevitable fact that everyman must die adds the dimension of urgency and intensity to life.

A recent symposium publication entitled Death Education: Preparation for Living[1] illustrates this focus on learning how to live by becoming aware of the reality of one's

death. Herman Feifel maintains in an essay in that volume that "death makes an authentic statement about life's actuality and meaning...it helps clarify and intensify our image of man and his world...Herein lies the summons to advance our comprehension of how death can serve life."[2] That all men will die is not an option. How an awareness of the fact of death in life enhances human freedom and enlarges the meaningful possibilities for living, is for each of us to choose. A distinction needs to be made between an acceptance of one's personal death and an awareness of the deathlike quality of the society. In the latter stance, the image of death is being used to critique an inevitably immoral society. I was particularly struck by this tension when I read an account of a course on death taught at NYU by Dr. James Carse, in which the students' focus on death seemed to be more cultural or political than personal. Death was used, for example, to describe American society as an enormous cemetary. There is no doubt that death is a seminal image for communicating feelings about the general order of things. My hunch is, however, that courses that focus on the cultural dimensions of death may enable the students to effectively by-pass what is the fundamental need for ordering our lives in the face of death.

Educational and/or therapeutic programs that help people focus on and accept their own personal death are required in our society simply because death has been so effectively isolated from the mainstream of living. As will become evident later, most of the students in my seminary course on death considered its primary value to be that they gained a new appreciation of the seriousness of life because it now included the necessity and reality of personal death. Given the eschatological mood of our time and the pervasive impersonal presence of death and violence in human life, it is not surprising that there is widespread interest in integrating the non-pornographic reality of one's personal death with one's understanding of living.

3) The third dimension of death education applies most specifically to those

who themselves are dying. For the first fourteen centuries of the Christian tradition, the art of dying well was virtually non-existent as a separate devotional strain. The development during medieval times of ars moriendi (the art of dying) was, according to John T. McNeill, a response to widespread violence, disease, and the grim horror of the Black Death during the 14th century in Europe.[3] Guidebooks were produced that were intended for use when clergy were unavailable but assistance was needed in order to prepare spiritually for death.

Without suggesting that dying was a matter of etiquette, William Caxton's The Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye (1490) regards "death with dignity" as a highly honored art or craft that the Chirstian was expected to experience in the face of death's horrors. For the Christian to die with dignity meant that the gracious spirits triumphed over the malign spirits on the battlefield of death and the individual died to the glory of God and the salvation of his own soul.

According to Nancy Lee Beaty, the tradition of ars moriendi achieved its artistic climax in Jeremy Taylor's The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying (1651).

> "At its core is once again the old conduct-book, in which a sympathetic pastor guides Everyman to heaven through the straits of death by directing his behavior and ministering to his piety with the voice of authority. But this material is now modified and enriched with every resource of humanistic culture, of Reformation thought, of Counter-Reformation devotion, and of pastoral insight. Now the reader's mind and heart and will are all to be enlisted in the endeavor to die well--and the enlistment must be for life, not for one brief battle. The resultant treatise is an Anglican synthesis in the finest sense of the word. All the distinctive but limited insights of the preceding two and a half centuries are caught up and merged into a single luminous vision of the nature and the meaning of a Christian death."[4]

The general expectations of piety prevailed, but to those struggles at death for spiritual supremacy Jeremy Taylor adds that all life is a progressive dying, so that to live well is to die well. It is nonetheless the Christian's duty to spend his last moments of physical dying "in learning, through God's grace, how to die spiritually to self and live in Christ."[5] Even though the committed Christian remains a part of the fallen world, Christ's healing presence is continued "through the Church, as ministers cure sick souls and heal the wounds of his faithful

soldiers."[6] Taylor adds significantly to the ars moriendi by paying attention to the physiological and psychological aspects of dying that accompany the spiritual struggle of death.

There is currently what seems to me to be a revival of interest in the art or craft of dying. The very popular book by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross On Death and Dying might be called a secular revision of these earlier guidebooks on the art of dying. The five temptations for the Christian at the time of death which William Caxton identified as unbelief, despair, impatience, spiritual pride, and avarice[7], are not unrelated to the five stages in the dying process outlined by Kubler-Ross. Furthermore, phrases like "death with dignity" and "dying a good death" are used today to describe a goal vaguely similar to that of ars moriendi although devoid of religious meanings.

This resurgence of interest in ars moriendi may reflect a larger anxiety with the threats to human existence that exist in a social fabric that is coming apart. Religious symbols generally have lost their power to sustain. The breakdown of the power of traditional death symbols such as immortality means that any new effort at reconstituting the art of dying is likely to focus on psychological processes to the exclusion of spiritual preparation. More significantly, the advances in medical technology have made it possible to extend the dying process almost indefinitely. The new options that are now available have created a need for some new criteria for deciding how and when one dies, decides he dies or decides not to prolong the dying. "Death with dignity" has become one such criterian. Ars moriendi, as an old and honored craft for learning how to "dye welle" with Christ, has been secularized and psychologized to mean a dignified death in the face of the dehumanizing effects of technologized dying.

Under this same general heading of ars moriendi and quite apart from the clinical approaches of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Avery Wiseman, or Glasser and Strauss, several personal biographies have been published recently that tell moving stories

about someone's dying process while implicitly providing a "guiding" model for the "good death." I have in mind here such books as Death Be Not Proud by John Gunther, Living with a Man Who is Dying by Jocelyn Evans, and others. These are important publications because they contain a point of identification with one's own experience that was seldom present in the old guidebooks in the ars moriendi, but they are of limited value simply because they rely on one person's (or one couple's) experience with dying and death.

The outline on death education suggested by Robert E. Neale in Pastoral Psychology (November 1971) follows in the tradition of Jeremy Taylor in connecting dying and living but deviates from the earlier ars moriendi in that his program in death education is not limited to those who are dying. Even so, Neale's death education program seems to belong appropriately under the dimension of death education that focuses on death in order to learn more how to live. It is my hunch that guidebooks for learning about dying will be of minimal benefit for those who are not dying unless they seek to identify experiences in ordinary life that are like dying. We learn the art of dying as we learn the craft of living through experiences of loss and separation.

4) The fourth category of death education is for those who will be professional caretakers of the dying and the grieving. I list it last because it presupposes the three previous dimensions. These differentiations among aspects of death education are important because there has been confusion of expectations and goals because needs and backgrounds are different. The pastoral caretaker needs to be able to accept his own death as a part of his life. Otherwise, termination will be a perennial problem in caretaking situations. Because he is able to appropriate the significance of death for his life, the professional pastoral caretaker lives and works with a sense of urgency that must nonetheless be modified by an ability to trust time in process. Finally the professional caretaker needs to understand empathetically the dying process. Both a good intuitive imagination and some personal experiences

of loss and separation will help the caretaker understand in a minimal way what it is like to die.

II

Until quite recently, theological education for ministry to those who were dying or grieving focused primarily on the need for spiritual preparation at one's death. It was not until Erich Lindemann's article on "The Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief" in the early 1940's that teaching clergymen about grieving began to take seriously the psychodynamic components of the process and the inadvisability of premature comfort. Subsequently, a great deal was written (and presumably taught) about grief but very little attention was given to the dying process. Cabot and Dicks in The Art of Ministering to the Sick had said as early as 1936 that "the tragedy or the victory of death is in the way one dies, not in the fact of death itself."[8] Ministry to the dying may involve the same skills as ministry to the grieving or the sick, but the emotional content is much more intense. Teaching about the dying process became a more manageable enterprise after Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross had provided some structure to that emotional chaos by labeling five stages.

I taught a course on death at Princeton Theological Seminary for the first time in the fall of 1971 with Dr. Daniel Migliore, professor of theology. There were 80 students enrolled. The structure of the course included weekly plenary lectures and preceptorial (i.e., small group) discussions. The approach was interdisciplinary and attempted to bring together both psychological/sociological and theological/ethical perspectives on issues related to death. Since the course was taught in a professional school training men and women for some kind of ministry in or through the church, the primary emphasis was on pastoral care of the dying and the grieving. Some of the cultural dimensions of death, therefore, were given

only cursory treatment. The outline of the course is appended to the end of this paper. Since ample bibliographies are available from several sources, I have omitted the bibliographic section of the syllabus.

The four goals that I stated in the first lecture were 1) to become more aware of our personal feelings about our own dying and death, 2) to learn about the psychological dynamics of dying and grieving, 3) to become more sensitive to what is and is not helpful in taking care of someone who is dying or grieving, and 4) to integrate our personal and clinical understandings of death with a theology that reflects the Christian tradition. Awareness of one's feelings about death is most essential because I hold that self-understanding is the sine qua non of any human caretaker. Even though the emphasis might be on developing one's grasp of the ethical issues and professional caretaking skills, with an issue like death the personal will always be present. One student put it this way in response to a questionnaire on the course. "The advantage of 'teaching' death is, I think, that the classromm context is structured, safe, objective, and under the guise of intellectual discipline. But in fact what happens is what one would hope happens; i.e., students are challenged personally to face the issue in their own existence, deal with it, and thus develop as better pastors."

In order to flush out some of the personal feelings about death, the students were asked at the beginning of the course to answer the questionnaire prepared by Dr. Edwin Shneidman for Psychology Today (August 1970) and to write a brief autobiographical sketch of their own experiences with or thoughts about or fears of death and dying. As one might expect, the seminary students stated that religion played a more significant role in determing attitudes toward death than did the population surveyed through Psychology Today. Even so, in most other respects this selected sample of potential clergy did not differ appreciably in their feelings about death. For instance, 60% (as compared with 57% in the Psychology Today sample) occasionally think about their own death. When they do think about

their own death, 43% feel either fearful, discouraged, depressed, or purposeless, as compared with 40% of those who responded to the Psychology Today questionnaire.

Many of the students were able to articulate this in terms of a cleavage between what they believed and how they felt about their own death. What this indicates, it seems to me, is that the symbolization of death and the meaning of life is as precarious for the theological student as it is for anyone else. The arsenal of religious symbols related to death no longer have the power to enable people to cope with the reality of death. They were more comfortable responding to death in abstract theological categories or in terms of other people's experiences with death than with their own. At the beginning of the course, apprehension seemed to be focused on theological considerations rather than on personal feelings. By the end of the semester, many students indicated that their personal apprehension about death had increased during the semester. Although that was not a goal of the course, I regard it as a positive thing that some students were able to shake loose from abstract thinking and confront in a beginning way the reality of death in a personal way. For anyone who teaches, it is important to realize that that integration is a lifelong process.

The autobiographical statements provided a valuable catalyst for sharing personal feelings very early in the course. The first small group session of the semester was devoted to discussion of these statements. After I primed the pump with some of my own fears about death, several students began to recall in this group setting personal and sometimes painful experiences related to death that they had not remembered to include in the autobiographical sketch. For instance, one student had a surprise birthday party when he was 18 and one of his 18-year-old friends dropped dead of a heartattack at the party. He had not included that in his autobiography. It became readily apparent that denial continues to function even though the assignment is to think personally about death.

The second factor that became apparent reflects the extent to which we have

successfully insulated dying from living for most people in our society. Less than half of the students in the class had ever attended a funeral. Some had never been to a funeral until they had to conduct one. Because of this kind of experiential deprivation, courses on death will have to include experiences related to death that students of another generation would normally have had as a part of growing up. This is what I mean by a course on death functioning on many levels. Those students who had worked through being confronted with a dying person were able to focus more specifically on the ethical or caretaking issues than those students for whom the course itself was their first significant encounter with death.

All of this initial emphasis on personal data created a tension between the personal experiential and the theoretical that continued throughout the semester. It became increasingly apparent that students both desired and feared more exploration of their own feelings about death. By the middle of the semester, the preceptorials were devoted to personal issues being raised for the students. Even though some theoretical material assigned for preceptorial discussion was scrapped in order to allow more time for personal data, students still complained that more feelings were being evoked than could be dealt with. That, it seems to me, is one of the unavoidable hazards of teaching about death. Two students that I know of thought seriously about suicide for the first time. Many more indicated that their fantasies and dreams produced some frightening material related to death. On the other hand, there were some who felt that insufficient time was spent on theological issues. It is much safer to retain some distance on something as volatile as death. There is the other danger of not paying enough attention to theoretical imput, particularly when students discover the liberating effect of dealing seriously with one's own emotional responses to a subject such as death. Teaching a course on death surfaces the split between the emotional and the cognitive in education in general.

Several students who responded to a questionnaire some months after the course was ended indicated that the central personal benefit of the course was an

increased appreciation for life. This is what I have already pointed to in the second dimension of death education. While this may in part be another way of circumventing direct confrontation with the inevitability of one's own death, I view this new openness to life as a positive effect of teaching about death. It goes without saying that no approach to death is valueless. The way in which a course on death is taught will at the same time indicate what about life is considered meaningful.

In reflecting on the benefit of the course on death, students were thinking about life with more freedom, more willingness to invest themselves, and a greater sense of the urgency of time. Examining in depth the final boundary of life enabled seminary students to become slightly more accepting of their being human because they were challenged to examine the feelings of immortality that they carry around inside themselves. Although most everyone has a wish to be immortal, I have an undocumented hunch that professionally religious folk have an inordinate desire to transcend ordinary human limitations.

Any teaching of death must pay serious attention to the affective and the experiential because teaching about death inevitably raises questions about life. Living and dying are not separate categories. To me, it makes most sense and is less threatening to place death on a continuum of experiences of loss and separation analogous to dying that may begin with being born. Although it is important to give a developmental overview of attitudes toward death in the life cycle, I am primarily interested in helping people identify in what way their present attitudes toward death may reflect a larger dis-ease with loss and separation.

On the theoretical side of teaching about death, I have found at least a couple of tensions operative. Some students found it very difficult to integrate their theological approach with the clinical data they were encountering. It was evident from the beginning of the course that they could intellectually agree that people need to express anger in dying or in grieving and that for those who are religiously oriented, God may come in for some hard knocks, but it was nonetheless

difficult for them to refrain from putting in a good word for God. My propensity for the clinical was effectively and beneficially balanced by my colleague's theological/ethical concerns. It became necessary to examine the whole notion of the Church's proclamation after I had said that premature religious words of comfort might be counter-productive for the grieving person.

Quite frankly, I was somewhat frustrated by the students' reluctance to grapple seriously with some of the knotty ethical issues related to death. For example, one cannot discuss the clinical aspects of euthanasia without at the same time re-examining 1) criteria for defining human life in a qualitative sense, 2) human possibility and responsibility in matters of life and death, and 3) whether man must do what he can do. Teaching about death did have the positive effect of forcing students to re-examine a wide range of theological presuppositions in a way that clarified a number of issues unrelated to death. For example, the problem of evil over the all-powerfulness of God cannot be ignored when one looks specifically at the death of a 5-year-old child from leukemia. In that sense, teaching about death is like going to the moon. The by-products of the effort may be the most beneficial.

There is another similar tension between description and prescription. As I have already indicated, issues about death and dying is a value-laden arena. Students impatiently jumped from what is to what ought to be. Suicide among the aging prompted perhaps the most heated debate of the semester. There were those who were arguing for <u>a priori</u> approval for suicide among, for example, the lonely, retired, isolated occupants of a dilapidated erstwhile hotel in New York City. It seemed to me that those students who were holding out most vehemently for suicide as an option (approved of in advance) were the very students who felt most impotent about themselves in relation to their world. It is unrealistic to assume that one could approach death only descriptively. What is required particularly is a renewed sensitivity to the ways in which our descriptions of death are indeed prescriptions about life.

I have three other observations that fall generally in the category of nuts and bolts. First, what is the optimum length of time that can be spent intensely examining a topic that is (presently at least) as emotionally charged as death? Some students indicated at the end of a semester's study of death that they had had enough for a while and were eager to move on. In some instances, I know that was avoidance. For other, however, it seemed as if a saturation point had been reached even before the end of the semester. By contrast, I spent one day a week for four weeks in a seminar on death with a group of twelve clergymen and nine of the twelve indicated that was too short a period of time. It would seem to me that teaching about death requires a different approach from the traditional quarter or semester approach. I would think that those who are on the 4-1-4 system might use the mini-semester for an intense focus on death, particularly because for many of our students such a course becomes all-consuming anyway.

It is self-evident and widely recognized, but I will say it anyway, that there are ample resources in literature, music, and the arts for teaching about death. Leo Tolstoy's The Death of Ivan Ilych should be a standard text for any course on death. It was even more disturbing than reading some clinical cases on a dying person. The literary piece I found most helpful in dealing with grief was C. S. Lewis's A Grief Observed, which are notebooks from his own grieving after the death of his wife. Additionally, we found music such as Bach's Come Sweet Death useful in chronicling and contrasting attitudes toward death in Western culture. A segment of The Bold Ones entitled "An Absence of Loneliness" and the television dramatization of Edward Albee's All In the Family were effective catalysts for specific aspects of death. It would be extremely helpful if someone could collect all the literary and audio-visual resources that are helpful in teaching about death.

Finally, a word is in order about assignments. While there is obviously a body of theoretical material that needs to be mastered and communicated in a cogent fashion, ample opportunity should be given to students to struggle with their own

individual questions about death in a way that is uniquely their own. As one student put it, "Death is such a personal thing, you cannot teach a course on it without paying attention to the personal side of it." If, however, in future years death will be less isolated from living and death education will be an accepted part of education for life, then education for professional caretaking will be able to focus primarily on theory and technique and only secondarily pay attention to the personal dimension of death education.

Footnotes:

1. Death Education: Preparation for Living, Edited by Betty R. Green and Donald P. Irish. Schenkman Publishing Company, Cambridge, Mass., 1971
2. Ibid. p. 12.
3. p. 158 ff, A History of the Cure of Souls, by John T. McNeill. Harper & Row, New York, N.Y., 1951
4. The Craft of Dying, by Nancy Lee Beaty. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., 1970. p. 197
5. Ibid. p. 220
6. Ibid. p. 264
7. Ibid. pp. 11-16
8. The Art of Ministering to the Sick, by Richard C. Cabot and Russell L. Dicks. The MacMillan Company, New York, N.Y., 1936. p. 314

Addendum:

THE MEANING OF DEATH TH-48/PT-27
Princeton Theological Seminary
Mr. Anderson & Mr. Migliore
1971

Aims. The primary aim of this course is to offer students an opportunity to explore the mystery and meaning of death and to discover the important life consequences of various ways of understanding death of of trying to cope with or deny it. The ultimate objective of the course is to clarify the Christian understanding of death in relation to other views and in interaction with modern psychological and sociological studies of death and dying. The practical goal of the course is to help prepare ministers for more effective service to the dying and the bereaved.

Method. The method to be followed in this course can be broadly described as multi-disciplinary. The phenomena of death, dying, grief, and mourning rites will be analyzed from the perspectives of the man sciences as well as from the perspectives of the biblical and theological tradition. There are five major sections of the course dealing respectively with (I) modern death denial in contrast with biblical realism, (II) developmental and clinical analyses of attitudes toward death and dying, (III) the meaning of death in the Christian theological tradition, (IV) death and some ethical issues (e.g., euthanasia), (V) the dynamics of grief and ministry to the bereaved.

Requirements. All students are expected to complete the weekly assigned readings on schedule. Written assignments must be completed on the dates indicated in the course outline. A semester paper not exceeding ten (10) pages will be due on the date set by the faculty for the final examination in the course. The topic of this paper must be approved by the preceptor and must include both empirical data and theological reflection. There will be no final examination. Students will be graded on a pass/fail basis unless they indicate their desire for a numerical grade no later than the end of the third week of classes.

Course Outline

1) Introduction: Man in the Face of Death.

I. MODERN DEATH DENIAL IN CONTRAST WITH BIBLICAL REALISM

2) The Reality of Death: Mysterous or Pornographic?

Read : L. Mills, (ed.), Perspectives on Death, pp. 168-196.
G. Gorer, "The Pornography of Death," from Death, Grief and Mourning, (on reserve)
R. May, Love and Will, (reprint)

Precept: Complete the questionnaire on death and write a brief (2-3 pages) autobiographical essay expressing your thoughts and feelings about death.

3) Immortalism and Biblical Realism.

Read: L. Mills, (ed.), Perspectives on Death, pp. 13-98.
A. Harrington, The Immortalist, pp. 11-29, (on reserve).
O. Cullmann, "Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Body," in K. Stendahl, Immortality and Resurrection.

Precept: Discuss Cullmann article.

II. DEVELOPMENTAL AND CLINICAL ANALYSES OF ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH AND DYING

4) Attitudes toward Death Through the Life Cycle.

Read: H. Feifel, The Meaning of Death, pp. 79-113, (on reserve).

Precept: Case study of pastoral caretaking with a child after the sudden death of his mother.

5) Stages in Response to Death.

Read: E. Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying, pp. 1-121
L. Tolstoy, The Death of Ivan Ilych.

Precept: Write a brief (1-2 pages) analysis of the dynamics of the dying process in Ivan Ilych.

III. THE MEANING OF DEATH IN THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL TRADITION

6) Death as Fate and Freedom.

Read: K. Rahner, On the Theology of Death, pp. 7-80.
K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, (reprint).

Precept: Discussion of death as a free act, (Rahner).

Footnote: Although Rahner's ideas on death are challenging and creative, this assignment turned out to be unproductive. It did produce enough student opposition so that from this point on more attention was given in the preceptorials to personal concerns.

7) Dying with Christ.

Read: T. Altizer, The Descent into Hell, (reprint).
K. Rahner, On the Theology of Death, pp. 56-80.

Precept: Discuss Altizer article. Write a theological essay (4-6 pages) on one of the following topics:

1. "The Wages of Sin" (Romans 6:23)
2. "The Last Enemy" (I Cor. 15:26)
3. "The Descent into Hell"
4. "The Resurrection of the Body"
5. "Dying with Christ"
6. "Eternal Life"

Footnote: This was a difficult assignment for several students because it surfaced a great deal of theological confusion on death. Students who brought rigid theological positions to the course remained largely unaffected by this struggle.

IV. DEATH AND SOME ETHICAL ISSUES

8) Medical Technology and Death with Dignity.

Read: J. Fletcher, "Euthanasia and Anti-Dysthanasia" (reprint).
L. Mills, (ed.), Perspectives on Death, pp. 231-252.

Precept: Case study on the question of hemo-dialysis treatment.

9) Suicide and Martyrdom.

Read: Ignatius, "Letter to the Romans," (reprint).
J. Hillman, Suicide and the Soul., pp. 24-37, (on reserve).
E. Shneidman, "The Enemy," Psychology Today, August 1970, (on reserve).
K. Rahner, On the Theology of Death, pp. 81-119.

Precept: Write a position paper on an ethical issue related to death and dying (4-6 pages).

V. THE DYNAMICS OF GRIEF AND MINISTRY TO THE BEREAVED

10) Grief and Bereavement.

Read: D. Switzer, The Dynamics of Grief, pp. 93-144, 170-214, (on reserve).
E. Lindemann, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," (reprint).
C. S. Lewis, A Grief Observed.

Precept: Discuss A Grief Observed.

11) Human Suffering and Divine Providence.

Read: W. Oates, The Revelation of God in Human Suffering, pp. 35-43, (on reserve).
A. McGill, Suffering: A Test of Theological Method, pp. 47-57, 77-93, (on reserve).

Precept: Verbatim of a pastoral response on a grief situation.

12) The Christian Meaning of the Funeral.

Read: L. Mills, (ed.), Perspectives on Death, pp. 209-230.
P. Irion, The Funeral: Vestige or Value?, pp. 170-189, (on reserve).

Precept: Write a funeral meditation (3-4 pages) on a biblical text of your choice or write an essay (3-4 pages) stating why you doubt the value of such a meditation.

13) Cheap and Costly Hope.

Precept: Open discussion.

All Rights Reserved

* * * * * *